



Opening Keynote Speaker

Wednesday, April 22, 2015

Maite Arce

President/CEO, Hispanic Access Foundation

“How Engagement Happens: Linking Diverse Communities and Trails”

In a time of changing demographics – Latinos have become California’s largest population segment – there is a critical need to connect and engage the Latino community with our parks, trails and greenways. Latinos’ passion for the outdoors and public lands provides ample opportunity to reconnect this community with their environment and to develop our next generation of stewards. However, engaging this community is more than just simple outreach – the culture of thinking needs to change. By understanding the concerns of and barriers to the Latino community, we can develop an atmosphere where Latinos have trust in the process and the desire to engage with them. There is an unprecedented opportunity to connect this enormous, diverse community with California’s parks, trails and greenways, but it will only be achieved by rethinking how engagement happens. By doing so, will see unparalleled growth in the number of Latinos reconnecting to nature, utilizing trails and greenways and advocating for their protection.

About Maite Arce:

Maite is a leading voice in creating access and enhancing opportunities for Latino communities to connect with information, partners, and resources they need for a better life. Combining trust-based relationships with grassroots organizing, new with traditional media, and intuition with data-driven results analysis, she has pioneered new models for ensuring Latinos across the U.S. thrive.

Maite’s interest in innovative community engagement spans her 21 year career in the nonprofit sector. She is the founder and President/CEO of Hispanic Access Foundation (HAF), a DC-based, national nonprofit, is well-known for its vast network of community based partners that work together to create trustworthy support systems that promote community action in health, education, finance and environmental protection.

Through Maite’s leadership, HAF’s conservation work encourages Latinos to visit parks and public lands and protect them from threats including oil and gas development, pollution and water shortages. Turning



information into action, HAF cultivates Latino passion for the outdoors and develops advocates who emphasize its protection with policymakers, media and others in the community.

The organization has been actively involved in re-connecting Latinos in the outdoors, building advocates and providing opportunities to voice their support for increased protection of public land and water resources. HAF has engaged Latinos in efforts to establish national monuments in the San Gabriel Mountains, the Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks and Browns Canyon.

“For me, preserving wilderness trails is personal. Conservation ethic deeply rooted in the hearts of all Latino’s. It’s time to change the rules of engagement. Establishing a powerful connection between communities and trails is vital for future generations. We can do this now, together.”